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FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
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RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC

UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000399

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DOL/ILAB FOR RRIGBY
DEPT FOR DRL/ILCSR FOR MMITTELHAUSER
DEPT FOR G/TIP FOR SSTEINER, RYOUSEY
DEPT FOR AF/E MBEYZEROV

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GOODS PRODUCED BY CHILD LABOR IN MADAGASCAR AND THE
COMOROS

REF: A) STATE 43120 B) ANTANANARIVO 224 C) ANTANANARIVO 164

¶1. (U) Per REF A, Post provides the following information regarding the use of forced labor and exploitative child labor in Madagascar and the Comoros.

MADAGASCAR
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¶2. (SBU) Post has previously reported on cases of child labor, mostly within the family unit, in the sapphire mines of Madagascar in order to help the family make ends meet. Detailed information can be found in REF B.

¶3. (SBU) There have been reports of child labor in Madagascar's stone quarries. Between June and August, the government's national statistic agency INSTAT and ILO-IPEC is scheduled to release the results of the first nationwide household survey on child labor that will likely detail the extent of child labor in the country's stone quarries. In the meantime, a November 2007 UNICEF study on child labor in the granite quarries (produced for domestic consumption) of Ambatomaro near the capital city of Antananarivo provides the following information, which may be representative of the child labor that is occurring in other stone quarries throughout the country. According to UNICEF, men, women and children work in the granite mines in Ambatomaro six days a week from 0700 to 1730, with a rest break from 1200 to 1400. Some of these workers are originally from Ambatomaro; others travel from elsewhere to work in the mines. Many of the women workers are single mothers who arrived at the mines with several children in tow either to escape domestic violence or simply in desperation to provide for their families. Of the 250 workers UNICEF interviewed, approximately 32 percent were between two and 15 years of age. Some of the older ones around 14 to 15 years of age work to pay their school fees. The children receive an average of 100 Ariary (USD 0.06) per day; the older ones who use hammers to break granite blocks receive between 500 and 1,000 Ariary (USD 0.30 to 0.60) per day. These child workers currently receive no social protection or basic safety equipment such as gloves or eye protection. Their hygiene conditions are nonexistent. The serious physical consequences include: respiratory problems including asthma, allergies and chronic coughing; deformity of the spinal column and fingers; vision problems; and stunted growth. Ambatomaro mine owners are aware of such problems and are currently building a creche to watch over the youngest children while their mothers work. A local Catholic church provides these girls and boys with catechism and reading classes once a week.

¶4. (U) In July 2007, Madagascar's Ministry of Civil Services and Labor issued a decree listing child labor in the mining sector as one of the country's worst forms of child labor. The Government of Madagascar, supported by and in collaboration with key partners such as UNICEF and ILO-IPEC, has put in place national oversight committees, national action plans, and local programs to prevent

such child labor, reinsert children into the school system, and/or provide them with alternative vocational training. Details on government initiatives to counter child labor can be found in REFS B and C.

THE UNION OF THE COMOROS

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15. (U) Both UNICEF and independent consultants confirm forced labor and exploitative child labor are not used in the production of goods in the Union of the Comoros.

MARQUARDT